

face Gentlewoman called Mistris *Towne*
Skinker, who was borne at *Wirkham*,
a Neuter Towne betweene the Emperour and the
Hollander, situate on the river *Rhine*.

Who was bewitched in her mothers wombe in the yeare 1613.
and hath lived ever since unknowne in this kind to any,
but her Parents and a few other neighbours. And
can never recover her true shape, till she
be married, &c.

*Also relating the cause, as it is since conceived, how her mother
came so bewitched.*



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and smoake being seene to issue from either, in whose meeting all the neighbour and adjacent villages, were not onely shaken, but utterly demolished; and all the Animals, both men and beasts, within many Furlongs of that prodigious conflict, were exterminated and slaine. Infinite almost are the Histories of the like presidents, which for brevities sake I omit; let therefore these few suffice for many.

I come now to prodigious birthes, of which this woman now in agitation is the sole argument, and that it may appeare the more probable to any that shall call the truth thereof in question; I shall intreat such but to looke backe into the Histories of the times past. *Herodatus*, and divers Authors have left recorded, that when *Xerxes* first prepared his invincible Army to invade *Greece*, a Mare, in stead of a Colt, brought forth an Hare, which was a preface of his flight and base defeat. In the yeare of Grace, one thousand foure hundred fifty sixe, *Calixtus* the third then being Pope, a Cow brought forth a Calfe with two heads, and bodies incorporate in one; and in the life of *Cous* in *Greece*, an Ewe of the flocke of one *Nicippus*, a heardsman, calved a Lion, which was a prediction that he should attaine to the Sovereignty thereof; which accordingly happened: neither need we much to question these, when our owne Native soile and these our Moderne times, have produced the like brutish Monsters, publickly to be seene in all parts of the City and Subberbs, &c.

But I come now to humane births, beginning with those forraigne, and ending with the Domestickes: about the beginning of the Marick Warre, one *Aleippe*, a woman of especiall note, at the time of her childing, was delivered of an Elephant; and another (whose name is not left unto us) of a Serpent. In *Thessaly* one was brought to bed of an infant, which had the shape of a Hypocentaure, and expired the same day that it received breath. And in the yeare that *Hanniball* besieged, and utterly subverted *Saguntus*, a woman of the same City brought forth a Sonne, which was no sooner borne, but voluntarily, and of its owne accord, crept backe into the Mothers wombe.

Albertus

Albericus Magnus writes that a woman in Germany, who brought into the world from her owne body fifty sonnes, five at a birth, but not one of them lived to be three quarters of a yeare old. And *Avicen* telleth us of another: who was delivered of two and twenty abortive Children at severall times, of all which, not one of them breathed one vitall Ayre.

I fall now immediately upon the party before propounded. In a place in *Holland*, called *Wirkham*, being a neuter Towne, as lying betwixt *Holland*, and those parts belonging to the Empire, on the river *Rhine*, lived one *Joachim Skinner*, whose wives name was *Parnet*, a man of good revenue, but of a great estate in mony and Cattell: these two having very lovingly lived together, without issue to succcede them in their goods and inheritance; it being no smal grief unto them, that either strangers, or some of their owne ungratefull kindred should after death enjoy those meanes, for which they had so laboriously travailed. When they were in their greatest despaire, it hapned thus, she found her self conceived with Child, which was a great joy and comfort to her and her Husband: But whether they were unthankfull for such an unexpected blessing, or what other thing was the cause, I am not able to determine; but so it hapned, that in the yeare 1618. she was safely deliver'd of a daughter, all the limbes and lineaments of her body well featur'd and proportioned, only her face, which is the ornament & beauty of all the rest, had the Nose of a Hog, or Swine: which was not onely a staine or blemish, but a deformed ugliness, making all the rest loathsome, contemptible and odious to all that lookt upon her in her infancy.

If the joy of the parents was great in the hope of a child, how much greater may we conjecture their sorrowes were, to be the parents of such a Monster: but considering with themselves, what heaven would have, they had not power to hinder, and studying (as farre as in them lay) to conceale their shame, they so farre mediated with the Midwife and the other women that were present at the delivery, that they should keepe it as close and secret as it was possible to

doe: and they called the name of it *Tannakin*, which is as much in English, as *Anne*, or *Hannah*.

This Prodigy *Revisus Textor* also remembreth us of a female monster called *Marin*, who from the Navill upward, had the Effigies of a faire and beaurifull woman, but from thence downward had the true shape of a wel proportioned Mare, with foure feete, a taile, & every limbe and member corresponding to an Equinall figure, who lived 123 yeares. In the Bishopricke of *Colen*, a woman, some think a witches curse, some other wise, brought forth into the world at one birth 365 Children: all which, though they were of wondrous small stature, yet they were borne with life, and Christned, and a Monument remaines for them to this day; her prayer, or curse, being, that shee might have as many Children. at one birth, as there were dayes in the yeare. Monsters, have bin born within these few yeares in *Virginia*, *New England*, and other Colonies of our owne Plantation, of which it is now too long to insitt. And the like prodigy is now, that a gentleman of quality, within this moneth dyed, who being opened in his heart was found a worme, in the forme of a Serpent, which stretched out, was found to be sixteene inches long. Sir *Iohn Mandevill*, in his Travails tells us of many Monsters, and strange kind of births, which to our thinking are impossible, but now we find to be true in length of time: And not many yeares since, was there not a man who had cloven feet, and commonly to bee seene in *London*.

But if we shall be jealous of the truth of reverend Antiquity, let us but looke backe upon our selves, I will give unto you a few instances for many: not to speake of those which have preposterously come into the world with their feet forward, and borne with their teeth in their head, as *Richard* the third K. of *England*, and others. Twin children have bin born amongst us with two heads and bodies from the girdlested upward, and but two legs and feet to support them both; and when one of them dyed, the other survived, but dot many houres after: A Scotch child about two yeares since, was to be, seene in *Barbolmeu Faire*, a Girlc about the
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age of seven yeares, who was so hairy, hands, face, and body, that you would have thought *Orson* to have been her father, & some she Bear her mother, yet had she her speech sences, and all other deportments of a child of her age; who had beene well educated and instructed. But to leave all digression, and come to the purpose now in hand, I will only remember unto you a very handsome yong man, late (if not now) in Towne, whose picture hath beene publickly set out to the common view, and himsele to be seene for money; who from one of his sides hath a twin brother growing, which was born with him, and is living stil; though having sence and feeling, yet destitute of reason and understanding: whence me thinks a disputable question might arise, whether as they have distinct lives, so they are possessed of two soules or have but one imparted betwixt them both; but of this let the Philosophers, or rather the Divines argue and define, being, I must ingeniously confesse an argument much above my Element.

This prodigious birth though it was knowne to some few, yet was it not made popular, and spoken of by all, which the Father and mother for their owne Reputations and credits were very carefull to maintaine, so that it was never seene by any (being an infant bare-fac'd) but vaild and covered, and so brought up in a private Chamber, both fed and taught by the Parents onely; and her deformity scarce knowne to any of the servants: and as the daughter grew in stature, so the father also encreased with wealth; so that he was accounted to be one of the richest men in all that Country. Now how she came to be borne with such deformity, there be divers conjectures; but if we may judge the cause by the effect, and of the precedent by the subsequent, most probable it is, that it came by witchcraft. And that there be such, we have manifest prooffe; for in *Skedam* in *Holland*, there is scarce a man or woman, but they are *Magi*, or *Saga*; that is, men or women witches: but for the last we need no further witnesse, than that of *Lancashire* witches some few yeares since; of which I make no doubt but this whole City have taken especiall notice of. Now whether witches have power

power to eff. scinate an infant in the wombe of the Mother, may be a question: of which, after some illustrations, by knowne examples (without any tedious devination) I hope to gaine the Reader ample satisfaction.

History tells us, that the Witch *Circe*, daughter of *Sol*, and the Nymph *Perfa*, who dwelt not farre from *Caictu*, a City of *Campania*, by her forcerous Spells and Incantations, changed divers of *Vlysses* his companions into Swine: If she had such a power over the whole, no wonder then if a Witch in these dayes, by the helpe of her Father the Devill, cannot disguise the face, which is but a part. It hath beene knowne also in our owne Country, that a Gentlewoman of good descent and quality, hath brought an infant into the World with a live Snake wrapt about the necke and body: in memory of which, that noble Family, in the emblazon of their Armes, give the Snake ever unto this day: which accinedt is quite against Nature, and therefore can be conferr'd upon nothing but Diabolicall forcery, and Witchcraft. I could tell you of the like prodigious things done by *Medea*, *Miscall*, *Eretho Magna*, *Dipsas*, *Ariphale*, *Locusta*, *Guthurna*, *Canidia*, *Neopolitana*, *Sagana*, *Vera*, *Falsa*, and infinite others; But though I study brevity, give mee leave to give thee this short Character.

Their power is by the permission of the higher powers, And instigated by the malice of the Devills, to transhape men into Beasts, make barren fields, blast Corne, unfruitfull Trees, parch and wither grasse and Hearbes; bring scabs and diseases upon men, and murraine and rot upon Herds, and Flocks: effascinate the eyes, weaken the hands, benumbe the feet, &c. Now to prove that this Child was bewitched in the Wombe, there bee these pregnant reasons following.

It is credibly reported, that this Burgers Wife having conceived, an old woman suspected for a Witch, came to beg of her an Almes, but she being at that time busied about some necessary affaires, gave her a short and neglectfull answer; at which shee went away muttering to her selfe the Devills *pater noster*, and was heard to say; *As the mother is*

Hoggish,

Hoggish, so swinish shall bee the Child shee goeth withall : which is a great probability that the infants deformity came by the malicious spells, and diuinish murmurations of this wicked woman, who after for the like or worse practices, both upon men, women, and children, whom shee had bewitched unto death, being brought within the compasse of the Law, and after to suffer at the Stake : amongst many other things confessed as much as I have before related ; yet either out of her peruerse obstinacy would not, or else (the Devill forsaking her in extremity, as hee doth all his other servants) in her deficiency of power, could not uncharme her : yet by this means that which was before kept so private was now publickly discovered to the world, insomuch, that much confluence of people came to see the prodigy, which wearied the Father, and cast a blush upon the Cheekes of the good woman the Mother : some desirous to heare her speake, whose language was onely the Dutch Hoggish Houghs, and the Pigs French Owce, Owce, for other words she was not able to utter ; which bred in some pitty, in others laughter, according to their severall dispositions.

Others were importunate to see her feede, then Milke and the like was brought unto her in a silver Trough, to which she stooped and ate just as a Swine doth in his swilling Tub, which the more mirth it bred in the spectators, increased in the parents the more melancholy : insomuch, that he bethought himselfe to find out some meanes, (if it were possible) either to mend or end his sorrowes. And to that purpose, hearing of a famous Artist, who was both a Mathematician and an Astrologian (whose name was *Vandermaest*) and lived not farre from him ; a man who was suspected to have beene well versed in black and hidden Arts : to him he repaired, and when he had made knowne his griefes by every circumstance, hee desired of him some present remedy, for which he would bee no way ingratefull.

Who after some pause told him, that after some houres attendance he would returne him an answer, the one way

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or the other, which gave him some small satisfaction, though not full to his expectation: but having wayted his leysure, he returned according to the time prefixt, told him that hee could wish him to marry her at any rate whatsoever; for whilst she continued in the estate of a Virgin, there was no hope of her recovery; but if then shee received any helpe, or hee comfort, though both seemed beyond all hopes; yet he advised him patiently to attend the successe, but howsoever not to match her unto Clown, Bore, or Peasant; but to a Gentleman, at least. In which answer though he could presume of nothing (being a Jewell and doubtfull,) yet there was no reason for him to despaire of any thing: so that having bountifully rewarded the Artist, hee repayred back to his owne house, and acquainted his Wife with the passage of the whole businesse; where they long consulted betwixt themselves, what were best in this difficult case to be done.

After much reasoning *Pro* and *Con*, they concluded to put her into very rich and costly habit (but her face still wayld and covered) and to give out that what Gentleman of fashion or quality soever, would take her to his bed after loyall Matrimony, (for shee was at this time betwixt sixteene and seventeene yeeres of age, and therefore marriageable) should receive for a Dowry with her, forty thousand pound, payed downe in Sterling and Currant money. *This was a baite sufficient to make every Fish, to bite at, for no sooner was this publickely divulged, but there came Suitors of all sorts; insomuch that his Gates were thronged as at an Outcry, or rather as a Lottery, every one in hope to carry away the great Prize of forty thousand pound; for it was not the person, but the prize at which they aymed.*

One thinkes with himselfe, so the body be handsome, though her countenance be never so course and ugly, all are alike in the night; and in the day time, put her head but in a blacke bagge, and what difference betwixt her and another woman. Another comforteth himselfe thus: *That if shee cannot speake, shee cannot chide; and therefore hee shall be sure not to have a Scold to his wife.* Another apprehends,

hends, That if shee feede but one wash and the like, shee will not be very chargeable to him for her Dyet; and therefore hee had have a good bargaine by the match.

These and the like inducements were so farre prevalent with them, that they came from divers places, & Countries, to solicit her for marriage: some from Italy, some from France, some from Scotland, some from England, and every one of them howsoever debosht in their means, and more studying upon her means then the maide, put all their Fortunes upon the hazard of an handsome suite, to appeare like a Gentleman; because otherwise they could have no admittance into her company.

But to give you better information, then by these suppositions, or rather stupid conceits, for her order of Diet; Shee doth eat all those meates which commonly we doe feede on, and doth digest it very naturally; onely shee doth feede in a Silver Trough, or Bole; which is alwayes carried with her wheresoever shee doth remove: and if shee doth want any thing that shee hath a mind unto, bee it Apparrell, or Dyet, she doth write her mind; and by that meanes, (as wee are given to understand, by those which have seene her) she hath all things to her desire.

Among some Sutors came a Scotch man being a Captaine, who having hazarded the greatest part of a moneths pay upon one Suite of Clothes, was desirous to see this Gentlewoman, and was received by the Parents; who thinking him to be some great Leard in his Country, gave him generous entertainment: shee was brought unto him with her face covered, and in an habit which might well have suited the greatest Lady in the Land; who admitting her feature and proportion, was much enamoured of her person; but desirous to see her face discovered, when he beheld it, he would say no other conference, but ran away without further answer, saying: they must pardon him, for he could endure no *Pork*.

Next came a Sowee-man, borne in England, having accommodated himself for the same adventure, and presuming that loving Sowee so well, no Hogs-face could affright him; hee presently at the sight of her could endure her com-

pany no longer, and at his farewell, said, so long as I have known *Ramford*, I never saw such a Hogs-snout, but whenever my stomach shall serve for any such dish, I will never venter upon any raw, but I will be sure it shall be eyther well boyled or roasted.

A Taylor came, having borrowed (whether with leave, or without I know not) a costly suite of his best customers: and he vowed notwithstanding all impediments whatsoever interdicting him, hee would enjoy her, and marry her, and sleep with her close as Hogs in pease-straw, but though hee liked her feature when her face was discovered, hee gave backe, and vowed hee would not goe through stitch with any such businesse, I should but lose my selfe in writing, and tyre the Reader in turning over many Voluminous leaves of paper, to shew you here many severall men and of sundry conditions, came in a kinde of jealousie one of another, to purchase this masse or magazine of money: every one ambitious after the portion, but not one amongst them amorous of the person, whose countenance was so far from seeming lovely to them, that it appeared altogether lothsome, and so I will leave her in this exigent, to acquaint you with a short story, that the carriage of the one, may make the other appeare more probable, they being of like affinity. My Author is *John Gower*, and thus it hapned.

A noble and warlike Knight, Cousin to the Emperour *Claudius*, of a spirit undaunted, and honour unquestioned, named *Florentius*, as hee rid upon an adventure, was taken prisoner by a Captain of a Castle, whose sonne he had before slain in battell, willing they were to put him to death, but they feared the indignation and revenge of the Emperour his Uncle: and hee being then in their power, they held a consultation amongst themselves what was best to be done, and where divers projects were laid: the mother to this Captaine, and Grandmother, to *Bruncu* before by him slaine, sayd, that shee had a plot to make him accessary to his owne death without any displeasure from the Emperour or any of his Noble Allyes, nay, that hee himselfe should assent thereunto without the least taxation of any injustice.

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And to that purpose, he sent for him out of prison, and thus said ; Though for the death of my Grandchild, *Bravens* both his Father and my selfe might take just vengeance of thee, since thy life is forfeited into our hands. Yet upon condition, that thou wilt resolve me of one question, which I shall propound thee : thou shalt have liberty for three moneths, but if in that space thou canst not give a full solution of my demand, thou shalt here take thy personall Oath, as thou art a Knight, to returne backe againe unto this Castle, where thou art now our prisoner and vassall, & yield thy selfe up to a voluntary death, freely acquitting us of the fact to thine Uncle the Emperour.

▪ This being concluded as well by oath as Obligation in Writing, sealed and subscribed, the question was, *What thing above all other women most desire ?* Imagine him now free on Horse-backe, and in his way to Court, where being arrived, and demanding of the wisest and gravest Philosophers, and others to be resolved in this poynt, and withall telling them of his owne danger if it were not answered. Every one were of severall opinions ; one said pleasure, another Pride, some that they desired most to be prayd and flattered, so that in this diversity of censures, he was forced to depart from thence unsatisfied : now he whose honour was more precious unto him than the preserving of a thousand lives, resolved to yield up his body according to covenant, and riding through a Forrest, some few leagues distant from the Castle, pondring a thousand things in his perplexed head he casting his eye aside, spied an old withered and decrepit Hag of the most ugly and loathsome aspect that ever his eyes beheld, who stepping unto him, and taking his Horse by the Bridle, said : *Florens* I know thee, and that thou art now going to thy certaine death, but be advised by me, and (upon condition) I will save both thy life and honour. Blame him not if being now in his flourishing youth, he gave her a willing eare, and cheerefully demanded of her what gift she would have ? or what taske impose him ? who presently answered : That when he had resolved the Riddan of her question (by her meanes) and had gained his life and liberty, hee should returne to that place where hee then found

found her; and from thence beare her to his place of residence, and make her his Wife.

Which when he heard he was now in a double distraction, as preferring many deaths before such a loathsome and unequall match: and so left her without reply. But better considering with himselfe, that being so old shee could not live long; and being married, it was in his power to mew her up from the sight of men: with other the like apprehensions, (and life being sweet) hee turned back and swore by his Knight-hood, hee would doe all that shee demanded: which being agreed betwixt them, shee told him, that when the question was again propounded: *What thing above all other women most desire? he should answer, To have their Wills, and the Sovereignty over their Husbands.* Let us imagine that by this he was acquit, though to the great indignation both of the Father and the Grandam, and came backe according to his Covenant, where he met with the former Hagge, of whom my Author in his olde English gives this description.

*She was the loathest wight
That ever man cast on his Eye:
Her Nose baas, her Brows bye;
Her Eyes small, and deep set,
Her cheeks been with teares wet,
And riveling as an empty skin,
Hanging down unto the chin:
Her lips shrunken been for age,
There was no grace in her visage:
Her front was narrow, her looks bore;
She looketh forth as doth a Moore, &c.*

In whose sight she was so odious, that now hee repenteth him that hee had not suffered death rather then to be so miserably disposed of. But shee still urging him upon his Knightly promise, hee was forc't in her torne and thredbare habit to take her up behinde him: but so ashamed of his burthen, that he only travailed either through woods, or by Owle-light, till at length hee came to his owne Castle, where

where necessity (though much against his will) compelled him to discover her unto the Lady his sister, and other of his neere Allyes, who were all much astonished and grieved at his wretched fortune.

But she still hastning on the March, the day of Marriage came, when the Ladyes striving to trick her up in the richest habit and best ornaments they could device, the more they strived to beautific her, the more ugly and deformed shee appeared. Briefly, married they were, and bed-time came, Heaven knowes to his small comfort, and less content: the Bride-chamber was prepared, and the roomes according to the Brides appointment stuck full of lights. The doores are shut, to bed shee goes, and urgeth him to make haste, and doe the office of a husband: who was no sooner layd by her side, with as much distance as was possible, shee plucked him by the arme, and desired him to reach a Light; and if she could receive no other favour at his hands, yet at least once more to look upon her, and she would acquit him of his promise.

This seeming to be an easie condition, hee takes a light, and looking stedfastly upon her, he discovered a sweet yong Lady of an incomparable beauty and feature, the like to who to his imagination he never had in his whole life time beheld: at which strange sight being much extasied, he grew greatly enamoured, insomuch that hee beganne to court her, and offered to kisse her, &c. But shee modestly put him backe, and said to him as followeth: Sir, I am indeed no other than I now seeme unto you: and of these two things I give you free choise, whether I shall appeare to you thus as you now see me, youag, faire, and lovely in your bed, and all the day time, and abroad, of my former deformity: or thus beautifull in the day, to the sight of your friends, but in your armes every night of my former Age and Uglinesse: of these two things I give you free choise of, which till you have resolv'd me, there can be no other familiarity betwixt us: therefore without pause give me a speedy answer.

This more then all the rest distracted him: For what was her beauty to him in the night, if shee appeared to all his friends

friends so loathsome by day? or what was her rare feature to him, either abroad amongst his friends, or at board, if she were so odious to him in bed? therefore he said unto her: Sweet and delicate Lady, I am confounded in your question; nor know I what to answer; but into your owne hands and choise I give the full power and sovereignty to make election of which you best please: At which words she lovingly turned towards him, and said: *Now Sir, you have given me that which all women most desire, my Will, and Sovereignty; and know I am the Kings daughter of Sicily, who by a wicked and forcerous step-dame was thus enchanted, never to returne to my pristine shape, till I was first married, and after had received such power from my Husband: And now from henceforth I shall be the same to you night and day, of that youth and lively-hood which you now see mee; till Time and Age breed new alteration, even to the last period of my life.* At which, how incredible his joy was, I leave to the opinion of the understanding Reader, who I hope will easily conceive what affinity this story may have with the former.

I should have spoken something of her residing in or about London, as of her being in *Black-Friers*, or *Covent-garden*, but I can say little: But certayn there is such a creature in *Holland*, as there is good testimony will be made by divers men, about the City of *London*, who were then Souldiers at that time, who have seen her severall times: but for her abode here I had rather believe it, then tyre my selfe to certesie the truth: onely abundance of people doe resort to each place to enquire the truth: some have protested they have seen her, by the help of their acquaintance, and give this reason why she will not as yet be constant in one place, because the multitude is so great that do resort thither, that they dare not be knowne of her abiding, lest by denying the sight of her, they that owe the house should have it pulled downe about their eares. Her portion it being 40000 pounds; she likewise goeth very gallant in apparell, and very courteous in her kinde to all. And whosoever shall in Pamphlet, or Ballad, write or sing otherwise than is discoursed of in this small Tract, they erre from truth: for what is here discovered, is according to the best, and most approved intelligence.

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